Issue No. 27

In The News

Vernon Opens StrongStart BC Early Learning Centre

Abbotsford Kids Get Early Start on Learning

New $7-Million Elementary School Opens in Langley

$2.7M Seismic Upgrade Makes Gold River Students Safer

World Experts in B.C. to Discuss Healthy Schools

Contact Information

Mailing Address:
PO Box 9045 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, B.C.
V8W 9E2

Telephone:
250-387-1977

Fax:
250-387-3200

E-mail:
minister.educ@gov.bc.ca

Links

- Media Room
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Message from Minister Shirley Bond

Honourable Shirley Bond, Minister of Education

This was a wonderful school year for me because I worked with the Premier to visit all 60 B.C. school districts. I travelled from Southeast Kootenay to Haida Gwaii/Queen Charlotte, from Surrey to Fort Nelson, and everywhere in between. Imagine hundreds of schools in almost 100 communities.

In all of B.C.'s many different districts and unique communities, I was impressed by the excellent work being done, and by local innovations. To celebrate this diversity and success, I recently made a short video that includes some specific examples, plus pictures, of the great schools and programs I visited. I invite you to watch this video online.

At the same time, I'm going to repeat one thing here to make sure as many people as possible hear me: thank you to the many students, parents, teachers, principals, superintendents and trustees I saw working so hard to improve B.C.'s already world-class education system. I enjoyed meeting you, and appreciated your hospitality.

For those I haven't had the opportunity to meet, know that I hope to keep visiting schools, and talking to the hard-working people that make B.C.'s many diverse districts so successful.

Have a terrific summer!

[Watch video]

British Columbia Backs Green Schools

Bond and student Andrea Mott unveil a plaque marking the official opening of Cambridge elementary school in Surrey.

This spring, the Province announced environmentally-friendly schools to be built in Abbotsford, Nelson, Saanich, Sooke, Surrey and Victoria. Similarly, two Surrey schools officially opened this month include design features like energy efficient lights, sensors to keep lights low, and heat reflecting roof material that keep the buildings lit and cool with the smallest possible environmental impact.

[Read more]

HOT TOPIC

This year has seen a number of "firsts" for the Ministry of Education.

- We held the very first teacher, parent and student congresses. All of these sessions successfully enabled direct dialogue with important education partners.
- The first of many StrongStart BC early learning centres opened around the province. The importance of ensuring youngsters are developmentally ready to enter the school system cannot be overstated, and so this is a program that promises to pay dividends for a lifetime.
- B.C.'s first virtual school was launched with LearnNow BC, providing students with more choice and flexibility. The expansion of e-learning also took form with the AskAway virtual reference library, launched last fall.
- New legislation to promote student achievement was introduced this past spring. One highlight includes replacing district accountability contracts with achievement contracts, whereby boards set specific goals for their students. To help boards reach these goals, new provincial superintendents of achievement will support districts and help develop their leadership.
- Legislation also promotes thinking beyond traditional K-12 boundaries to include early learning, community and adult literacy services. Boards of education will soon be establishing district literacy plans to guide this.

This is just a sampling of the many exciting developments that have occurred over the past year. We've also further established ourselves as a national leader in promoting healthy and environmentally-friendly schools, and we continue to support our Aboriginal learners to help them achieve their very best. Together we've accomplished an awful lot, and for that I would like to say "thank you".

Reading Corner

This gentle book is about Tabitha, a little girl who has trouble falling asleep. Her imagination wanders and soon the objects in her room, including stuffed animals, invite her to sleep in their chosen way: the eagle in a nest; the rabbit in a cave. Of course, Tabitha must find her own way. With two-page pictures painted in soft watercolours, this makes great bedtime reading. The book is suitable for students in grades K-2.

How Sleep Found Tabitha
Written by Maggie de Vries
Illustrated by Sheena Lott